

Panel Links Ray's Brother to King Murder

United Press International

The House Assassinations Committee disclosed today it has incriminating information that links a brother of James Earl Ray to the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray's brother, Jerry, was called to the committee witness stand this morning and bluntly informed of the information against him. Committee staff counsel Mark Speiser cautioned Jerry Ray that he had been summoned for the dual purpose of assisting the panel's probe and because of his possible personal involvement in the King slaying.

"We have received information of an incriminatory nature," Speiser said, which would indicate "you are a co-conspirator" with James Earl Ray, who pleaded guilty to the murder.

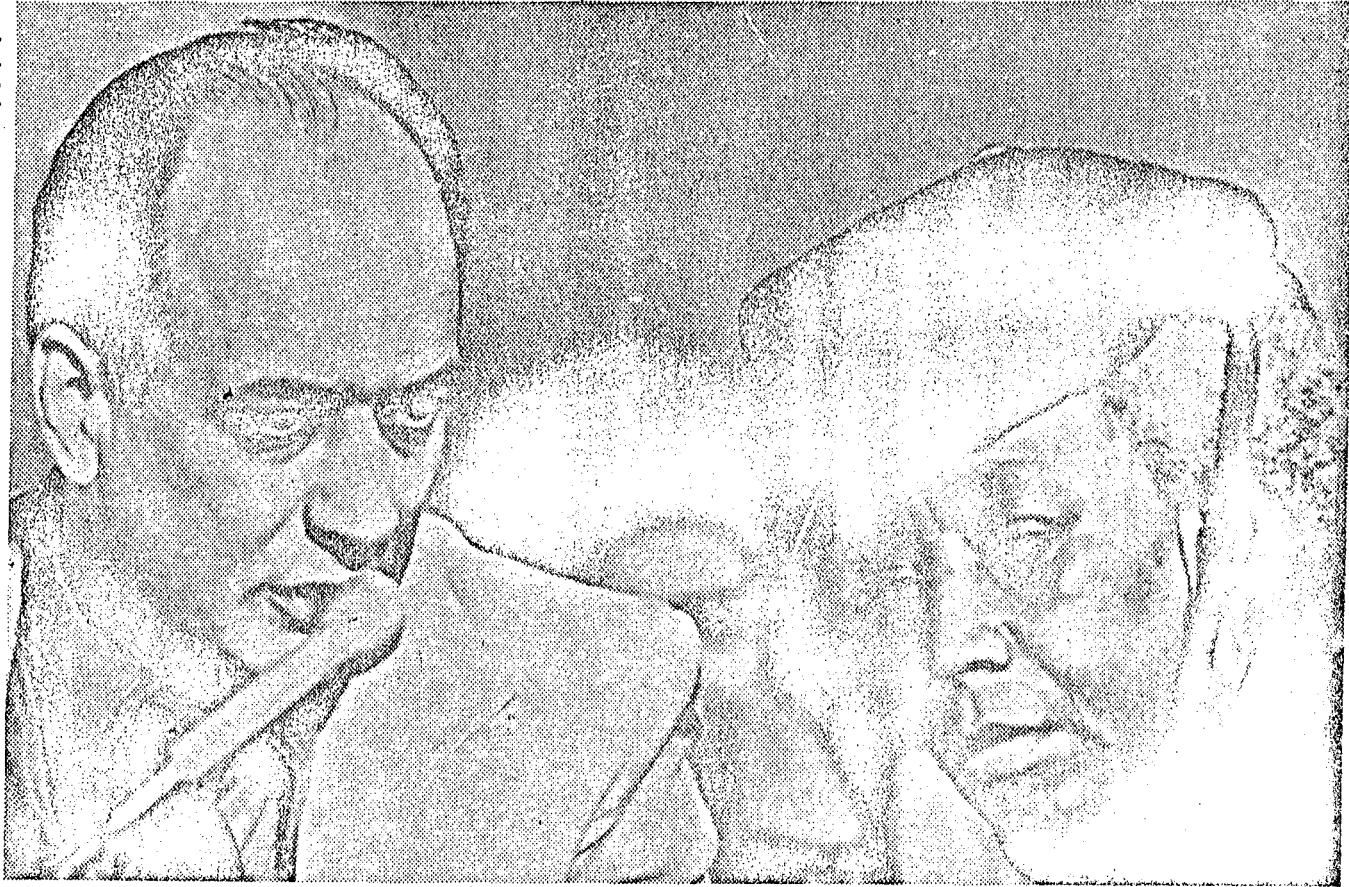
Steiger said the panel had concluded that Jerry Ray gave "false information" during previous questioning in both closed and open sessions. Today, Steiger reminded the witness he was under oath and in a sensitive "posture."

WITH THAT, the hearing exploded into acrimonious protests from Jerry Ray's two attorneys, one of whom is a black woman.

As the hearing opened, chief committee counsel G. Robert Blakey said the panel "is about to try to settle once and for all the crucial issue of a conspiracy."

Referring to Raoul, the man whom James Earl Ray has cryptically identified as his contact in the murder case, Blakey said, "When you come down to it, the Raoul theory that seems to fit is that the mysterious accomplice might actually be one of Ray's brothers, Jerry or John, or a composite of the two of them."

Florynce Kennedy, Jerry Ray's lawyer, demanded that Blakey's "speculative" remarks, which she said were based on "circumstantial



—Associated Press

Jerry Ray, brother of James Earl Ray, talks with attorney Florynce Kennedy during questioning today by the

House Assassinations Committee which is probing the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

evidence," be stricken from the record. Committee chairman Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, ruled, however, the remarks should stand.

John Ray, arrested Monday in St. Louis on burglary and assault charges, is scheduled to appear before the panel tomorrow.

ON WEDNESDAY, Blakey said, "There is reason to question the adequacy of the FBI's response to substantial evidence of contacts between

Ray and his brothers . . ." He cited these items:

- "Denials by Jerry and John of pre-assassination contact with James that are in conflict with information established independently."
- "Missouri State Penitentiary records indicating John visited James the day before he escaped (April 23, 1967)."
- "Information that Jerry, on two occasions, admitted knowledge of a conspiracy in the assassination."

- "Ray's statement to a salesman in a gun store just six days before the assassination that he wished to exchange a rifle on advice of his brother."

The committee has carefully reviewed the possibility one or more brothers staged the unsolved \$27,000 robbery of an Alton, Ill., bank on July 13, 1967, and shared the loot with James Earl.

Jerry was so upset by this suggestion last summer that he emerged

from seclusion Aug. 19 to visit the bank and deny he robbed it 11 years ago.

He then went to the Alton police and repeated the denial.

THE COMMITTEE heard extensive testimony yesterday about an alleged \$50,000 reward for King's death that was offered by two now-deceased St. Louis men, and the possibility that James Earl Ray killed King in hopes of claiming it.

Auto dealer Russell Byers testified he was offered the reward in late 1966 or early 1977 by John Kauffmann, a businessman, and John Sutherland, a patent attorney. He said he turned them down.
